

Keynote

Living in a candy store

Abstract

Getting started as a researcher and later building a research group by yourself as a junior faculty member is not easy, but it is also one of the most rewarding experiences. The best part about it is the degree of freedom academia brings. It is almost like living in a candy store: there are simply too many choices of topics to work on and things to do, that it is sometimes hard to stay focussed.

In this talk, I will draw on my own experience of being a PhD student at ETH Zurich, doing a PostDoc at UC Berkeley, taking a first job at Brown University, and later my move to MIT. I will talk about lessons learned in regard to choosing the right research topic (for your PhD or as a junior faculty member), how to set up successful collaborations, dealing with rejections of papers and/or grants, and other random anecdotes about academic life.

Bio

Tim Kraska is an Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science in MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, co-director of the Data System and AI Lab at MIT (DSAIL@CSAIL), and co-founder of Einblick Analytics. Currently, his research focuses on building systems for machine learning, and using machine learning for systems. Before joining MIT, Tim was an Assistant Professor at Brown, spent time at Google Brain, and was a PostDoc in the AMPLab at UC Berkeley after he got his PhD from ETH Zurich. Tim is a 2017 Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellow in computer science and received several awards including the VLDB Early Career Research Contribution Award, the VMware Systems Research Award, the university-wide Early Career Research Achievement Award at Brown University, an NSF CAREER Award, as well as several best paper and demo awards at VLDB, SIGMOD, and ICDE.